

Title: Interview with Christiana Hudson

Date: April 18, 2025

Location: Hansen's Craftery

Interviewer(s): Christian Ottey and Christopher Knorr

Interviewee: Christiana Hudson

Introduction: Christiana Hudson has lived in Crisfield for a few years and has no historical connection to the town like many in Crisfield do, so she brings a new perspective on Crisfield and its community. She homeschools her 3 children so she relies on the community events to get her kids connected with the town, but there is a lack of them along with the lack of communication between the town and its citizens about anything going on, from projects to flooding events.

[Transcription begins]

Christian Ottey (Ottey): Yeah, this one's going. [pauses]

Christopher Knorr (Knorr): Alright, so before we get started, we're just going to be, my name is Chris Knorr. I'm one of the interviewers. It is the 18th of April, it's about 11:20 I think, and we are at Henson's Craftery, right?

Ottey: And my name's Christian Ottey and we're here with-

Christiana Hudson (Hudson): Christiana Hudson.

Ottey: So, we're just going to start by going down the list here. So how long have you lived in the Crisfield area?

Hudson: My family and I moved to Crisfield in 2021.

Knorr: What kind of made you guys move to Crisfield?

Hudson: The house prices. We have a four-bedroom house and it was \$110,000. That was the driving factor. We lived in Laurel, Delaware, and we were looking for a house that would fit our family.

Knorr: Would you say that's what also sort of keeps you there, then, that the-

Hudson: Yeah, I mean, we like it there. We stay because we like it too, but yeah. [pauses]

Ottey: So, are there any other reasons why you like staying in Crisfield besides the housing price?

Hudson: The community is nice; we do a lot in the community and we enjoy the people that we've met since we've moved to town.

Knorr: So, you said it was a family of four. Do you have children that you also-?

Hudson: We're a family of five.

Knorr: Family of five? Oh okay.

Hudson: Yeah, we have three kids.

Knorr: How is it like raising your children in Crisfield? Is that?

Hudson: I feel like I'm a little unique in that one because my kids are all homeschooled, so they don't go to the local school. But as far as the community goes, I feel it's a great place to raise kids. They can play outside in the street, you know, and I don't have to worry about them. They can walk together to the store and they're okay. I feel safe.

Ottey: So, I guess with raising a family in Crisfield, you mentioned, you know, kind of just always having somewhere to like play outside. What else has there been for like kids to do in Crisfield? Maybe not your own kids, but.

Hudson: There's, we go to the playground. We really like Wellington Beach, it's a place to play in the water and it's not like waves like the ocean. We fish a lot so fishing and crabbing is a thing we do with the kids. The bike trail is a nice place to take like my older kids. My youngest, we don't take on her bike, but we'll take her to walk out there because it's nice. We do a lot of library programs.

Knorr: Would you say that the waterfront of kind of the bay plays a big role in like recreation and social life then for you guys, in Chesa- or Cris-

Hudson: Definitely.

Knorr: -in Crisfield.

Hudson: Yeah, definitely. It's definitely something we would miss if we moved out of town.

Knorr: Is that your main source of kind of like entertaining yourselves in Crisfield? Is there anything else that you guys do to entertain yourself with?

Hudson: We go to the festivals like. We haven't actually been to our Crab Derby, but we do the Heritage Festival, we saw the Giant Duck, we do the Fall Festival at the library every year. We vended, but our kids attend that because we're vendors too, but it's a fun event to take them to because they know most of the people in town and they can just wander around and do all the stuff.

Knorr: So, you would say that you probably attend a lot of community events regularly. That's like something that you guys are, yeah.

Hudson: Yeah. We try to, I mean between having the business and being so far away, but we try to do as much as we can in town because it's- it's a nice community.

Ottey: So, I guess with you and your family, what are some of your most cherished, cherished memories in Crisfield?

Hudson: That's a good one.

Ottey: I know it's a good question, so.

Hudson: It is a good question. I just, I don't know. We started going to the community garden as soon as it started back up and I think that's probably it because we made a lot of like family friends there. We, people that are a part of our daily lives and my kids are friends with these adults and you know what I mean? We made that connection. That's how I started to meet people in the community was going to community garden. Because before that I didn't know anybody.

Knorr: I know you said you just kind of moved there, I guess recent, four years now is how long you've been there, what- but have you noticed any changes in Crisfield from when you first got there or any changes from Laurel, Delaware, to Crisfield, Maryland? Is there anything that?

Hudson: There's definitely big changes from where we were to where we are. I'm not sure there's many changes in the last four years. I worked as an EMT for a private company and I traveled to Crisfield as far back as Sandy. And I remember what it was like then and it's a huge difference now, like. There was before that hurricane, there was a lot of other things to see in town. And it's kind of sad to see them go. But as far as what since we've moved there, I don't think there's been any major changes. I do see like new businesses in town, which is interesting because there weren't when we first moved to town. So, I think that is one of the changes. Sorry, I just talked in a circle. That is one other changes I've noticed is new businesses. Because when we moved there- there was hardly anything. There wasn't businesses on Main Street. There wasn't a whole lot down by the dock and we're seeing things shift around a little bit.

Ottey: That's good. I know like from some of the other people we've been interviewing who have kind of lived in Crisfield their entire lives, they've kind of gone from like, it used to be this, you know, real booming place with the whole crabbing industry and fishing industry and seafood

things and it's kind of dialed down a bit. A lot of that industry has left Crisfield. So I guess, I don't know, it's nice to hear that it's, kind of, from your- your new perspective coming into Crisfield recently, it's- it's kind of changing.

Hudson: I think the seafood has definitely changed over the years. When I moved there, I didn't even know where to go buy seafood, I think. And I feel like a town that says that they're the crab capital of the world, it should be easier to find. Honestly, that was tricky.

Knorr: Would you say kind of like the nuisance flooding or like the storming has been different than when you're in?

Hudson: Absolutely. We did not know what to expect with the flooding. We moved to Cove Street, which is one that floods regularly. We did not know that before we bought the house. Like I knew Crisfield flooded. I knew that there was water sometimes that I had known. Like, most people know that. But I didn't realize the street we moved to was one of the deeper ones, I guess is what I'm saying. We bought the house and that same year we had a bad one. Our house did not get flooded, but our garage did, our sheds did. And that was a bit of a shock for us.

Knorr: How, how would you say that these like events and flooding how, how does it like affect you daily?

Hudson: I'm still, after all these years, trying to learn not to put things on the floor in the garage. That first big flood I lost a lot of stuff and I met somebody from Smith Island and her best advice was never put anything on the floor and I'm like what? She says, "You just don't store stuff on the ground, it's just not feasible," and I am still struggling with that. If we know that there's a full moon and a storm coming up the coast like we'll go put tables up and put stuff on tables, but I still have to consciously do it because I- I'm struggling with that like people put stuff on the floor. It's just hard.

Ottey: It's kind of breaking into a new habit.

Hudson: Yeah, learning new habits, moving the cars when we know it's gonna be bad. At least the car I have a truck now, so it's not as bad, but.

Ottey: So, is there anything else that you do to prepare for these flooding events?

Hudson: We pick up our lawn stuff. I have kids, so there's always toys. We try to clean up anything that'll wash away. We tie down things that'll blow away. We pick up all the stuff in the garage. We prepare our animals. We have chickens. So, their coops are already elevated, but we raise them higher when we know there's gonna be a flood. So, like they're always two feet off the ground. And if we know that there's like, we know the five feet of inundation is gonna be water to my front steps. So, we raise the coops up another foot. With cinderblocks and stuff like that to be prepared.

Knorr: It sounds like you kind of have, you're already kind of just in your short time living there have kind of picked up on?

Hudson: Yeah, you gotta learn quickly.

Knorr: Yeah, yeah.

Hudson: It's a lot of mess to clean up after a flood, so you gotta learn one way or another.

Knorr: Yeah, it's definitely like a changing of the- the way that you kind of operate and the way you live your life a little bit has to switch.

Hudson: Yeah, and we've talked about getting a fresh patch for our dogs, because that's something that, my younger dog doesn't care about the water, she will swim in it, it doesn't matter. But my older dog will not get her feet wet if there's a half an inch of water in the grass. So, the first big flood, like she didn't go out, she refused to go out and that can't be good. That's another one of the weird things what we do to be prepared.

Ottey: So, when you bought your new house in Crisfield, did it, I guess, what kind of, did it- did it have any like renovations done to it to prevent flooding? Or was there like anything in the house, any of like the infrastructure of the house that was there when you brought it?

Hudson: I don't think so, our, I don't know if we have a sump pump or not, we never figured it out. There's like the underside of the house, like under the- the crawl space is not super-elevated. It's like a standard 18 inches, 24 inches. I'm not sure what it is, but it's just normal. Like the house next to us is six feet off the ground because they did, they flooded and they had the raising. Our house has never had water on the inside. So, I don't think that there's been any major renovation for that. Our garage was built with the flooding in mind because there's like, I call them flow through holes, I really don't know what they are, but they're like the vent holes that you put on a foundation, but they're just open. And I believe that was made for the water to come and go. But I don't think there was extra renovations.

Knorr: How much of the preparation for kind of like the storms and the flooding would you say is also kind of like community-based? Like is there a strong sense of community of a lot of people in Crisfield, people that have been there for, you know, like their entire lives, generations often, let's say like we always check in and call our neighbors or we make sure that would you say that's also been your experience in Crisfield?

Hudson: Yeah, with the people that we've met, to make sure that you don't need help moving your car, like especially if we know somebody only has one, do you want us to take you over? Now we've taken them to Marion, so you want to drive you up there and bring you back? You know what I mean, follow you up and bring you back. I know everybody tries to get sandbags when it's offered for each other and stuff like that.

Ottey: So, you mentioned your neighbors had had their house raised because of the flooding. Have any other neighbors done any other kind of renovations to their homes because of the flooding?

Hudson: They're the only people I know personally enough to have talked to and it was actually the neighbors and they've sold it since so I don't know the new guy but the ones that owned it when it flooded that had it lifted are the only ones, I know personal enough. But I do see on my street another house being raised farther, closer to the marina.

Ottey: So, when your old neighbor moved, was that part of because of the flooding?

Hudson: They were summer people, but it, they were selling it because of the flooding. Yes, they were just older and tired of cleaning up afterwards.

Knorr: Obviously, you're one that has moved into the area, but have you kind of with some of the community members that you do know or have you ever even thought about like relocating up more north? Like you said, you didn't realize maybe where you had lived was one of the lower ones, but had that ever crossed your mind?

Hudson: It is something we talk about. Probably in the next 10 years, we'll move because it's a lot of work. I mean when it floods, it's a lot to clean up. And I'm in my mid-40s, but I'm going to be getting older and the older I get, I don't want to do these things. Like, we see so many older folks struggle with the floods and rebuilding and repairing. It's not something I want to do.

Ottey: So, if you were to relocate in the future, how far away do you think you would move from Crisfield? Would it just be a little bit up north, or?

Hudson: Just farther out 413, like probably between Crisfield and Marion, or maybe Marion, or Westover. Like we're still looking to stay in that basic area.

Ottey: Yeah, just to get out of that, like, high-risk flood zones.

Hudson: Yeah, just to get out of the high-risk area, definitely.

Knorr: Kind of speaking on that a little bit, have you ever participated in any community events kind of around like flooding or anything?

Hudson: I've seemed to miss them. I don't seem to hear about them until after the fact, and I would. I've heard that there's been some really good information, and I've missed out on some of them.

Knorr: Have you- I know that a few of the people I've interviewed have said the same thing where it's like there's been like a bit of a disconnect between the information of before it comes out and then it's already out and it's like I don't know if there's like?

Hudson: Definitely a communication problem in town like with even events. It's just a thing I think we need to work on.

Knorr: Would you say though that there, do you know of any projects that have excited you or concerned you regarding anything in the city, like development or some of the flooding stuff, or?

Hudson: The business development program that they were promoting last year to help three new businesses get started I think was amazing. As a business owner, if I wasn't already here, I probably would have considered it myself. But I'm not in a place to have two locations and I'm not ready to relocate my business. But I love the idea and I think it's awesome. I'm looking forward to seeing what comes from that. I heard that there was another flood study going on at the library or is that your study?

Knorr: I think that's the Resilience Academy stuff that's in the library.

Hudson: I thought that sounded interesting. I actually tried to encourage my son to go do it and he missed the sign-up for it. You know, this is one of those things. That sounded neat to know that people are actually trying to hear what's happening so that we can make changes.

Ottey: So, so would you say the city kind of has a good connection and like hearing the community's voices and including them in some of the changes?

Hudson: I think they're trying, I- I can see some efforts, like it doesn't matter which mayor it was from the time I moved there to where we are now, I feel like everybody has a common goal of improving the flooding, improving the way of life, improving tourism. Yeah, I think they're trying.

Knorr: Yes, I think I've noticed definitely a trend in that people believe that the- the mayors and the city administrations have been like, they all have good intent, but there's definitely been a bit of a split on what people think is the best route to handle-

Hudson: Yeah.

Knorr: -different things.

Hudson: I think consistency would help, like, just to like drive force, but I, I definitely feel like everybody has that common goal of making it better.

Ottey: And then there's always that issue with, like, some grant programs falling through for the City of Crisfield and, you know, money's always an issue for everything, so.

Hudson: Yeah, and we're not like a super-big population, so I think it makes it harder for the town to get grants or stuff and we don't have a huge tourist attraction anymore. I don't know what the right words are there. I like- I feel like in the older days that there had been a lot more tourist activity in town, and I do see people come to town in the summer more than we see in the winter. But it's not like, I used to live in Ocean City, it's not like that. It's not even that kind of influx, it like just.

Knorr: Kind of speaking to that a little bit, do you think that it's harder for maybe like the youth generation to kind of to get them to come back in or if there's, you know, you maybe just got there a couple years ago but people have spoken on like people graduating from high school or once they get into college or something or that age, they just leave Crisfield. Would you say that?

Hudson: Yeah, I think that that's the case, especially for families like mine where we're not from there. I think some of the people who have deep family roots go to college, live a few years away, and then come back because their whole family's there, but. Probably my son, because he loves Crisfield, will probably stay, but my girls probably won't. They'll probably go to college and go somewhere else, just because if we're not there, they're not going to keep, you know what I mean, keep coming back. And I think that's the difference, which is a shame, because it's a cool place, like, it's a nice place to raise a family.

Knorr: I think that's pretty interesting because that's exactly what we've seen in a lot of our interviews or people that do have the ties are like, this is where my family is, this where I've always been, and that's sort of why they moved back, but it is kind of interesting to hear from somebody who moved there to say like, do you think that if there could be more development and maybe they can handle the nuisance flooding and kind of get that under control that maybe you would say like your daughters would maybe consider coming back into Crisfield if there was more there, or is it?

Hudson: I think if the flooding wasn't such an issue, probably. They like the water life, like going to the beach and doing all the fishing and stuff. And it's really convenient for that lifestyle. But I'm not, if there wasn't a tide and- and the flooding, like I don't see it, I just. But I- I- it's a lot of water. Like I don't know how they're going to fix it that fast, is what I'm thinking.

Ottey: So, have you seen the city work on any, like, projects to change the infrastructure around flooding, like maybe like putting in like more floodgates or clearing out ditches?

Hudson: I- I don't know about those things. I do see them clearing like the sewer drains and doing some sort of project on that. And I think that is tied to the flooding. I live on Cove Street

and there's been a constant pump problem and when it- when they get it fixed and it's running, our flood water doesn't stay as long. So, like I see them making repairs and stuff like that, but I'm not really sure what's happening with the floodgates and they're definitely not cleaning out ditches. Like, I don't see that at all.

Ottey: Yeah, we know one of the big problems is like the land's just getting like oversaturated with a lot of water, and the water is just not being able to drain properly, so.

Hudson: Yeah, you can dig a 6-inch hole and there's water. Yeah, it's definitely saturated.

Knorr: Just had a question. Oh, I just had a question and I'm kind of blanking on what I was going to say. You said that you, like, there is a big tie to nature and that, to Crisfield, a lot of people feel that. And you've said that you, most of your connections have been through that community garden. Do you think that maybe the direction that Crisfield could kind of go in is kind of like an ecotourism and like the education of the nature and?

Hudson: I think that'd be awesome.

Knorr: Yeah.

Hudson: Yeah. I do think that they could do that. We have a lot of beautiful nature, we. My son has trail cams just to see what kind of wildlife we have and there's a lot. There is a lot to see in Crisfield that you don't even realize or expect.

Knorr: So, you say that's definitely an area where they have more like potential to capitalize and grow on that kind of yeah.

Hudson: Yeah, I know that the state park does some stuff like with tours, but it'd be neat to see the town do the paddle tours and stuff like that.

Knorr: Do you think the state park and like the city government have a fairly good working relationship, or is it kind of like, state park does their thing and the city does their own thing?

Hudson: I think they're separate; I feel like it's separate. I don't feel like they're against each other or anything, but I definitely feel like there's a separation there.

Knorr: Yeah. [pauses]

Ottey: So, I guess we can maybe change topics a little bit, excuse me, a little bit here, but have there been any, like, I'm sure most of your experience with flooding has been just like nuisance flooding, it popping up probably, you know, a few times each month, but have there been any like big flooding events that you can remember?

Hudson: Yeah, there's been three or four big ones since we've been there. The first October, they call it the Halloween flood. We own two lots, side by side, and one's our house, one's our garage. And we had just settled on the garage two weeks before the Halloween flood, and that's the one that I had to do all that clean-up with. That one was pretty big. We didn't know what was coming. We didn't know what to expect, it was. We moved our car at the last second, and it was like a flash flood, where all the water came in. Husband was walking back. That was a big one for me because I was scared. I was worried about him. I didn't- I didn't know it was going to flood like that. And then, yeah, I learned fast with that one. And there was another one that flooded our yard but not as badly. And a Christmas one that flooded just, I would say almost as bad. Probably not inside of my garage as bad, but then it froze. And like the whole road was a solid sheet of ice for days. Like, thick sheet of ice for days and that was the Christmas flood is the one they call it, but I don't remember what year that was. Those two were the worst and I know that there was one in between those two that wasn't great either.

Knorr: Would you say that, I guess when you first got there, it was probably kind of hard to access, but when there have been, like, bigger storms or floods that the information about, like how you could predict it's going to look is fairly accurate? Like, you know, if- if something, like you said, you know, you if there's going to be this, you start raising stuff. Would you say it's pretty accurate and you can?

Hudson: Yeah, I think it helps. No one liked the numbers and I do think it is fairly accurate. Sometimes they predict flooding and it doesn't happen, but they've never not predicted it when it did happen. Do you know what I mean?

Knorr: Right, yeah, nothing's caught you off guard.

Hudson: I'd rather do the work and it not happen but I'd- I'd rather not- not know about it.

Knorr: Yeah.

Hudson: Yeah. Yeah, I do. I think it's great. I think the county does a good job of putting out information. We belong to the- the phone thing where they call you and give you warnings and that's been helpful. I wish there was a little more early warning sign with that phone call thing because sometimes I'm just too busy to catch it on Facebook. You know what I mean.

Knorr: Yeah, what is it like, they give you, I know it's the weather, so it's always kind of like changing everything.

Hudson: Yeah.

Knorr: But do they give, typically, do they give enough time for you to kind of?

Hudson: So, when you see the, the Somerset County, I don't even remember what it's called, but it's Somerset County Facebook page. They'll give you plenty of time on the Facebook page, but the phone calls are usually like hours or minutes before something happens and that's not always enough time because I'm- I work an hour, almost an hour away from home, so.

Knorr: Yeah.

Hudson: It's not always enough. I think like just a text on that system would be really cool the day before or two days before hey, we're expecting flooding, because I'm not always on social media or I'm on my business page, which isn't attached to that. You know what I mean?

Knorr: Yeah.

Ottey: So, you mentioned earlier that you used to do EMT work. You said you were a part of Sandy, was that- that was down in Crisfield, where you were doing emergency?

Hudson: I was, I worked for a private company and we did some evacuations before Sandy. We traveled, I worked out of Salisbury and Seaford, Delaware and I traveled to McCready to take people up to Salisbury for Sandy. But we did regular hospital transfers from McCready to Salisbury. So, I had been down to Crisfield a few times, probably as early as 2011.

Knorr: Had there ever been a time where you weren't, if there was like a storm or anything bad, where you guys like just couldn't get in to the area you needed to and then had to?

Hudson: Yeah, the- the Sandy one, we were the- I don't know who it was at the time, like at the time I thought it was the National Guard, but now that I know that Crisfield owns one of those trucks. I dunno if it was the town or something bigger, but they turned us away on the last one, they're like the water's too deep. But that was just, we- we're just doing transfers, like. We had taken quite a few people; our company had taken quite a people out of town for that.

Knorr: Yeah, we had talked to a few people that we've interviewed that said they've had to be picked up by the- like that they bought them, bought a couple of those military trucks for extraction.

Hudson: We've seen it and from home during the two really bad floods that we've been there for. We see them coming up, because we're, I don't know, three blocks up from the marina, so we see people coming from the marina direction out towards Somerset Avenue with the truck and people in the truck. It's like it's kind of, it's good that they have it, but then it's kind of scary to know that they need it.

Knorr: It's like a reminder.

Hudson: Yeah.

Knorr: I know the- we went down to do, or I went down with a couple other guys to do an interview in Crisfield, like, I think last Saturday, which, if you remember, the Friday, it rained pretty bad. It was like raining all day.

Hudson: Yeah, we had some water that day.

Knorr: Yeah, and we were like walking around trying to do a little bit of like inter-petitioning to try to get some more interviews and everything and there were a couple roads that were like just still totally.

Hudson: Mine was, definitely. Yeah, I know.

Hudson: Yeah, and it was like we had to like walk in the middle of the road or just turn around and find somewhere else. It's kind of crazy to think that, you know, you think of certain things or you can always go out and run or you could always go outside and play or something and you know oftentimes, it's kind hard because it's like this entire road or this field is completely.

Hudson: When it's just flooded, flooded, and still people walk through it. But some- some of those storms, it's moving, and we all know that that's not safe.

Knorr: Yeah.

Hudson: Nobody wants to go in moving water, especially flood water. But I've seen that a few times now, at least three. I've see moving water on my street. We have standing water often.

Knorr: Yeah.

Hudson: Heavy rain, just a random Nor'easter, you know, high tide. I'm sorry, it's just ridiculous how much it floods, but.

Ottey: So, given how much it's- it's been flooding recently, have you seen any, like, physical changes to the land itself? We heard from another person we were interviewing the other day that the beach is actually kind of like starting to erode back.

Hudson: Yeah, it's- it is, like the water's up closer to where you step down in there and it, I've noticed that. I've notice that the ground is so much wetter because I'm a gardener, like I garden at home. I have all raised beds because the ground's so saturated, but I've definitely noticed like one shovel full and there's water and it- it wasn't like that four years ago.

Knorr: Yeah, talking a little bit about, I remember he- he was kind of talking to us about Wellington Beach and about the- you spoke on that, do you think that's like a- an example of the time that they've been using the nature that they have to their advantage and trying to grow like, they said that more families have been kind of going to Wellington Beach and it's been a place

for people to kind of enjoy. Would you say that it's been a pretty, like, one of your more favorite places I guess in Crisfield or?

Hudson: Yeah, we like it. And there's not usually a lot of people there, which is surprising to me, because it's such a nice little place. There's a playground, and there's a big sandy area, even not just along the water, like back where the playground is, for kids to run around and do stuff. We like it. I know on some of the holidays, when there's more people in town, it's packed, but like a regular weekday, it is definitely not, even in the summer, which I find surprising. We like the park at the library too, but sometimes it's underwater.

Knorr: How would you say, just as a general, businesses are doing in Crisfield, like you spoke to the initiative they had to try to help push those three businesses in downtown, but would you say that it's, what would you say the business?

Hudson: I think service businesses do well, but I'm not sure about retail. I don't think retail has enough daily activity and that's important too. I know that the big events, they get a big crowd and they have a lot of sales and that helps, but you need the daily activity or the weekly activity and I'm not sure that we get that. Definitely not in the winter and- and probably not as much in the summer as they need to really be prosperous. But the service businesses are doing well, like hair places and, you know, the, lawn guys, like you know what I mean? The service, people need that service and it's there and nobody wants to leave. It takes 20 minutes to get to Pocomoke or Princess Anne or- or more if you drive the speed limit. I'm just thinking it probably takes 25 or 30 for Pocomoke for me. It take a while so anything that you can get done locally is, it helps.

Ottey: Kind of relating that topic to, I guess, the opportunities that you have to develop their careers in Crisfield. How- how would you say that is looking in the future? Do you think that kids really have potential to develop their careers in Crisfield or?

Hudson: I don't know. It depends on what line of work they're looking at, I guess. I don't feel like there's a ton of like, skilled careers or college-based education-type careers like. There's McDonald's and Food Lion, but that's not a career. It's hard. Like, there might be room for plumbers because of the water, but I really don't see a big plan there.

Knorr: Yeah, as a business owner yourself, do you think, you said, like would you ever, is the future of kind of Crisfield kind of looking hopeful in the business sense? Like would you ever see yourself in the- in sometimes maybe moving your business from here to Crisfield or is it, it's just not, there's just not enough substance there, do you think that you would be able to?

Hudson: As it is right this minute, I don't think there's enough. I'm a gift store, so I don't think there is enough need. But I've heard about there might be a ferry, and if that happens, there's a real potential for more foot traffic, tourist traffic. And I think that lower end of town would- will

do better. And yeah, if- if there are more people, then I think there's a chance, but I think it's quite a ways away.

Knorr: So would you say that ferry project is one that would- would help kind of, you do see as exciting and would help kind of incentivize people and businesses to?

Hudson: I look forward to seeing where that goes, like I think that would be awesome. We as a family have talked about, "Oh, we could go here or we could there," and we would totally do that. You know, it'd- it'd be neat to have just something besides just Smith Island or Tangier to go to, by boat.

Knorr: Well, I know it would be nice because maybe it helps create the roles for the retail businesses and it helps to create the need for, like you were saying, skilled careers or-

Hudson: Yeah.

Knorr: -educational based careers. You know, there's got to be some influx there.

Hudson: Yeah, I think it would be neat. I am excited to see if that happens and- and how it goes once it does.

Ottey: Yeah, we- we had another one of our interviewees mention the- that ferry project, but yeah, there's not obviously too much detail that we've received on it.

Hudson: We haven't heard a whole lot about it anymore. I heard at first and that it was hopeful for July or something of this year, but I haven't heard much else since and we used to get cruise ships that would stop like the little one from Baltimore and I haven't seen that lately either. And I think that that kind of tourism would help a lot, especially for those businesses that could be walked to from there.

Ottey: Yeah.

Knorr: Yeah, many people have kind of likened Crisfield, or the potential of Crisfield to, like, if you've ever been down to St. Michael's.

Hudson: Yeah.

Knorr: They've kind of, like where, if they could kind of develop a little bit more of the arts and kind of like those retail stores and everything, like you said, and maybe the ferry, is that, do you see that same potential in Crisfield as well, or?

Hudson: I think the potential is there, but I think there needs to be more, more than there is now to get it to happen. Events might help. I mean, I saw that they've joined the Main Street America thing, and that is an awesome program. We do that here. And you plan events, and you advertise

for these events, you get people to just come out, and I think that is a good start for the area. Because if there's not businesses and things to do, then even a pop-up temporary type thing would be something to give people, "Hey, we were there for that, remember?" I didn't. Hear that a lot about the duck. The duck brought a lot of people to town. And people are still here talking about, "Hey remember that? We had never been down there before." And I think if there were big events like that, but we could get more people down there.

Knorr: Do you think sometimes the environmental factors can cause an issue with that? Like they plan something and then-

Hudson: Yeah.

Knorr: -here comes the heavy rain and then.

Hudson: Yeah, yeah, and that's concerning like, because it's hard to plan a big something and then have it flood out, or the wind, or rain, or hurricane season, you know. Yeah, that's true, that is definitely a problem.

Ottey: So, going off of that, I guess that's maybe one of the differences between like having a business here in Snow Hill compared to having a business in Crisfield. Are there any other big differences that kind of stand out to you being a business owner here in Snow Hill compared to Crisfield?

Hudson: We here get a lot of tourist traffic from places that are only 30 minutes away. And I think it's easy to get somebody to drive for 30 minutes to do something. With Crisfield, it's 30 minutes from the next closest major places and I think that's a big part of our problem is it's gotta be worth the draw for people. Cause if you're not in Pocomoke or Princess Anne, you're looking at 45 minutes to an hour and nobody wants to drive that long just to go, do something for an hour. Do you know what I mean? It's not- it's not something that's going to give them a whole day's worth. Was it worth the drive? And I, that is one of my concerns for Crisfield. Because here, it's not that far to anywhere. We even get people from Greenbackville, which is only half an hour for them. So, you know what I mean?

Knorr: We've heard- we've heard the quote; I think it was the interview we did with Jesse where he said, "It's like 30 miles down a dead-end road," where you got to, what you just said, incentivize people to want to take that and if, it's hard when, you know.

Hudson: Yeah, my first time down there, not my first time, my son's first time there, we- we weren't even considering moving to Crisfield yet. I was taking things to the boat to send to Smith Island because I was consigning things at the bakery. And so, I took my son with me, he's a teenager. I said, "This is the longest road to nowhere you'll ever be on." That's what I said when I turned on the 413 and he's like, "Yeah, it's really straight too," and yeah, that's the thing, like we

say that and we think that way and. It'd be neat if it was a long road to somewhere like, you know? I feel like it used to be. I- I- when I first started in EMS like, we used to walk around when we were waiting. If we had to wait for a patient to be ready, we'd go walk around the strip, look at stuff and it's not always- the businesses aren't always open now, because there's not enough people. [pauses]

Ottey: Yeah, I guess that kind of goes back to like our old discussion about the- the ferry too, because you know, people go down to Crisfield for something, they might go down for the ferry, you know.

Hudson: Yeah, they might, like they, some people will come for the Smith Island trip and if they're coming to do the other boat, then that would be more, yeah.

Ottey: Just less of a dead end.

Hudson: Yeah. Yeah.

Knorr: Yeah, I think the hard part that certain people, some people don't always pick up on, I think you'd probably get as like a business owners, a lot of people want there to be certain shops or like a movie theater or all this and that and it's tough because it's like the demand is not necessarily there for the businesses to go in there.

Hudson: Definitely get that. Like the- the overhead based on the sales is a very important part of business. You're absolutely right. And I do hear a lot of people want to have this and they want to have that. But if you don't have the people, how are you going to sustain that? They're going to open and they're going to go out of business and then they're gonna have negative feelings about town. And that's just gonna make it worse. That's why I keep, even want to talk to people in town and push them. We got to do events because pop things are easier, to attract people and you don't have to sustain them as long, like you can get short-term vendors in there and have somebody come into town and go, "Hey, we had a lot of fun doing this." I know we do Crab Derby really well, and we do that really big every year, but then that's like the only big thing happening, in my opinion. I know there's other things that happen, but I don't feel like they're advertised enough.

Knorr: You kind of show people in that, you know, if it's a day or a weekend event, kind of the glimpse that the people do very much enjoy about Crisfield and the parts that- that people do love about Crisfield. If you can kind of share that with people and then all of a sudden you can get the, you know, demand side of things, people wanting to- to go down there. Like you said, I like what you said where it's like a long road to somewhere would be nice if that's what it became.

Hudson: Yeah. A lot to do. I know a lot of businesses aren't open on Sunday, which I think is detrimental to tourism. When we first moved there, we had plans to eat out and do this and do

that because we were moving and nothing was open. We called our real estate agent, "Hey, what's open on Sundays?" and he was like, "Two places." And it was like, "Wow, this is tough." and it's gotten a little better over the years, but I think a lot the traditional folks still close on Sunday, it's like, we're a weekend kind of town. I could see people go in there Friday, Saturday, leave on Sunday, but if there's nowhere to get breakfast or shop on the way out, like, I think that hurts. We'd make them leave Saturday instead of Sunday, and that extra day would be nice for people in town.

Ottey: How do- how do you feel as far as, I guess, entertaining things for kids to do in Crisfield? Is- is there a lot of that? I know you mentioned that your kids often just go outside and play outside with others.

Hudson: I think there's a lack. I know that there have been groups that have tried to get things going and I'm not sure that there's enough community participation to keep them going and- and that stinks. I know there's the library does a lot; my kids are homeschooled so we do a lot of their programs and activities for socialization. As far as things put on by the town, there's few things around holidays which is awesome. But there's not a regular, consistent thing to do for the kids.

Knorr: I would say that it's interesting because we've been talking to certain people and you would think that a lot of people would maybe be pro-trying to get the youth more involved in upbringing them, but there are a lot people that I think see Crisfield as like, the reason that, I think what you're speaking on a little bit from what I've gotten is that people are like, I don't see a viable way to get youth involved or something. Is that something that you've maybe felt?

Hudson: Yeah, I think that that's a struggle with the younger generation to begin with. Like with volunteerism alone, like in the community garden, we got a lot of older folks. And then the only young people that are there are related to those particular older folks, you know what I mean? And I think it is hard to get people in general to do things like that now. If it involves volunteering, I do think it's harder. My son's just turned 18. And it's like his age group, in my opinion, that struggles with it. Like, there's a few kids that are all about community, but I think that it is harder.

Ottey: Yeah, and I mean that might not necessarily like be a thing with Crisfield, just maybe a generational difference there.

Hudson: Yeah, I think so, because we struggle with it here, too. There's a few, but usually those few parents are also community-minded folks to begin with. [pauses]

Knorr: I guess kind of changing gears here a little bit, but do you feel that climate change is something that's like kind of actively discussed or planned for in Crisfield, or?

Hudson: As a whole, probably not, and I think it should be. I think a few select group of people are talking about it and thinking about it, and- and trying to push for it, but I think like, a lot of people are just like, it's always been this way and aren't, I don't know, accepting the things that are changing. I don't know what the right words are here. I think that it's a big thing that needs to be considered. But I know quite a few people personally that are just saying that it has always been that way. It's always been that way, I'm like.

Ottey: It might be that they're like a lot more used to the flooding because.

Hudson: Maybe.

Ottey: They've been there for longer, but- so it might be something like that.

Hudson: I'm not sure.

Knorr: Yeah, I- I- I would 100% agree. There's been a lot of the- the- a lot of people have answered in that way where it's like this is- this is the way Crisfield is, this is how we do it.

Hudson: Yeah, I can see that. And I'm not- I'm not sure that that's necessarily the way that it's happening. You know what I mean? I think it is getting worse, or it could be getting worse if it's not dealt with.

Knorr: Yeah, I think that's, yeah, as someone who's moved in there recently, but who's been kind of, like you said, been working there before and then moving in there, I think you could probably say that you would think that it's maybe changed different from when you-

Hudson: Yeah definitely.

Knorr: -worked in there.

Hudson: It's definitely changed over the years.

Ottey: So, is that- is the topic of climate change kind of discussed between like two different groups of people in Crisfield? Like maybe it's discussed within like the City Council but not really the rest of the community or?

Hudson: Yeah, I think that there's probably, like, task force-type groups that discuss it. And- and then there's the general population that doesn't want to, I don't know if they don't want talk about it, don't wanna think about it. Don't wanna admit to it. I'm not sure what it is. But it's definitely some pull back of, this isn't our problem. It's infrastructure, or it's this. I think there's a lot of arguing over what the water's coming from. Do you know what I mean?

Knorr: Sometimes I think when we've asked people about it, they often, I think, associate it with like failed government plans or the suggestion of like relocation and a lot of people that have

been there and rooted are like, this is our home, this where we're going to be. So, do you think maybe some people view it like almost negatively because it's like a suggestion to just like leave or relocate instead of just like maybe acknowledging or facilitating that it could be part of the discussion?

Hudson: I'm not sure, honestly, like I really, I don't know. I know there are a lot of fingers that get pointed. I do hear a lot opinions about if the- if the- they, you know, I guess the town, I'm not sure what they mean by they, they cleaned the ditches, then it wouldn't be like this. Or if they fixed the floodgates, it wouldn't be like, but are we sure? Like, that's my question. Are we sure that's it? I'm not sure about, yeah, people probably don't want to relocate, especially the people who have multi-generations of history. You know, their families are buried in the graveyard in town or just outside of town and you know people are really rooted. Yeah. I think that could be part of it. [pauses]

Ottey: All right, I think we might transition here into kind of our last really pretty broad questions that we have left on our list here. They're kind of just like, really broad, encapsulating ones, so. Are you hopeful for the future of Crisfield?

Hudson: I am. I think they're trying. I think it would be awesome to see it grow and I think they're taking the right steps, but I think it's going to be a while.

Ottey: A lot of small incremental steps they're going to have to take to get to their goals.

Hudson: I mean encouraging three new businesses, looking into how to fix things, I think, I think they're working on it. I think it's going to be a while, but I think that it will get there eventually, if it stays on the path that it's on, but if- if the- the general consensus changes, might not.

Ottey: Where do you think you would like to see Crisfield headed in the next 20 years?

Hudson: Oh, 20 years.

Ottey: Yeah.

Hudson: I think it'd be neat if it was like back to being a ecotourism, like boat tours and, pedaling, fishing. There's just one charter boat in town left. It's just not a thing anymore, and maybe they could take them out on crabbing boats, if fishing isn't so big in the bay anymore, I don't know, something I think would be neat to have tourism again.

Knorr: Yeah, to kind of play on the parts of Crisfield that, you know.

Hudson: That are awesome, that we love about it.

Knorr: Do you think that the City of Crisfield can help create that, or that's more of a little bit of a communal mind, or a- a mindset shift, or?

Hudson: A little bit of both. I think there are plenty of people that have either grown up there or even come there that are definitely interested in nature and wildlife and seeing it in its all because, you know, some of those marshes have birds you haven't seen or, do you know what I mean? I never saw a crayfish before I moved down there in person. There's just all kinds of stuff and I think the town could maybe encourage those kinds of businesses, like an ecotourism type business, bike rentals or I know somebody has them somewhere, but I don't know where they are. Like that's- make these things more obvious. Maybe make it easier to rent a boat or a canoe or. I think the town could do it. I think with enough things to do, you can get people in town and they go, "Hey, we should come back and do this." I know that last year, I think it was last summer, somebody did a parasailing thing. Like those are the kind of things I would like to see happen. I think it's neat.

Ottey: So, would you recommend Crisfield as a place to live?

Hudson: Yeah. But do your research, know where you're moving first. There are definitely better areas than others. I think in town, it's an awesome town. I think if you have a high clearance vehicle and you know what you're getting into, it's not so bad.

Ottey: Just be prepared.

Hudson: Know what you're doing, look at the elevations. Because if I had known, we probably would have looked at a different house a little harder, but we like where we're at. We like our people and our neighbors aren't bad. It's a good community. And those are things they tell people. They talk about moving down there. Just- just know what part of town that floods, because not everybody floods as bad as we do, you know, or as bad as Windfall does, or some of the other areas that flood really bad. Some parts of town don't flood at all, unless it's major, which is kind of not so bad.

Knorr: What kind of wisdom would you like to kind of share with the future generations?

Hudson: About flooding? Or about the town?

Knorr: Or just about, just the town of Crisfield, yeah, it can be, yeah anything.

Hudson: Ah. I think they should work on building the community as a positive place to be, a positive thing. There's a lot of negative that happens on social media, in town, you know. If we focus on the positive, I feel like we could do more, I feel that will help grow.

Ottey: Probably lead to more action being taken if people are more inspired to.

Hudson: Yeah.

Ottey: Be hopeful and do- do things.

Hudson: Yeah, I think that a lot, a little positivity goes a long way in a lot of things.

Knorr: Do you have any more?

Ottey: I've got nothing.

Knorr: Gotcha.

Ottey: I think we'll go ahead and wrap it up here.

Hudson: Okay.

Ottey: Unless you have anything more to say.

Hudson: I don't think so.

Knorr: Alright, well thank you, thank you a lot, that was good.

[Transcript ends]